

**Amendment to the Claims**

Kindly amend claims 1 and 7-10 as set forth below. In accordance with current amendment practice, a complete listing of claims is provided herein. The changes in the amended claims are shown by double brackets or strikethrough (for deleted matter) and underlining (for added matter).

1. (Currently Amended) A wax runner for use in forming a wax tree by fusing the wax pattern gates of wax patterns to the wax runner, the wax runner comprising:

a branch of wax having two ends and including a head at one end and a tail at the other end; and

a plurality of risers located ~~[[on]]~~ along the edges of the surface of the branch of the wax runner, wherein the risers are configured to confine molten wax to an area of the surface.

2. (Previously Presented) A wax runner for use in forming a wax tree by fusing the wax pattern gates of wax patterns to a wax runner, the wax runner comprising:

at least one branch of wax having two ends and at least one flat surface and including a head at one end and a tail at the opposite end; and

risers located along the edges of the flat surface of each branch, wherein the risers are configured to confine molten wax to an area of the flat surface.

3. (Original) A wax runner according to claim 1 wherein each riser is a small rounded dam.

4. (Original) A wax runner according to claim 2 wherein each riser is a small rounded dam.

5. (Original) A wax runner according to claim 1 wherein the branch has a circular cross section.

6. (Original) A wax runner according to claim 2 wherein each branch has a rectangular cross section.

7. (Currently Amended) A combination of a wax runner and an automated wax pattern assembly system ~~for use in forming a wax tree by fusing wax pattern gates to the wax runner~~ comprising:

a wax runner for use in forming a wax tree by fusing wax pattern gates to the wax runner, said wax runner comprising

one branch of wax having two ends and having a tail at one end and a head at the other end~~[[.]]~~ and

at least one locator on the head and the tail, both locators being aligned with one another; and

means for ~~and adapted to facilitate~~ positioning ~~[[of]]~~ the wax runner in a fixture of an automated pattern assembly system.

8. (Currently Amended) A ~~wax runner~~ combination apparatus according to claim 7 ~~further including~~ wherein the wax runner further includes risers on the surface of the branch.

9. (Currently Amended) A ~~wax runner~~ combination apparatus according to claim 7 wherein the branch has a circular cross section.

10. (Currently Amended) A ~~wax runner~~ combination apparatus according to claim 7 wherein the branch has at least one flat surface, the flat surface having edges and having risers located along the edges.